

## An ANSWER to a Paper Falsly called, The Case of the Company of Weavers.

**T**HE Title is false, because when it was shewn at a Court of Assistants of the Weavers Company, they all disown'd it, and said they knew nothing of it.

Objection, *They say the Lustring Company obtained from the last Parliament a Clause whereby it prohibits the Buying or Selling any Alamodes and Lustrings that are not sealed by the Seal of the Custom-House for Foreign, and the Seal of the Company, for Goods made by them. By which it manifestly appears, that by this Clause it is not the Importation of French that is prevented, but the Selling of those of the same Nature made by others at Home, &c.*

Answer, It manifestly appears the contrary; because when there was no Seal but for Foreign Alamodes and Lustrings, when any seizure was made, the Smugglers would pretend them made in England, and so puzzle the Officers: For remedy whereof the Commissioners of the Customs promoted a Seal for those made by the Lustring-Company; it being taken for granted, that since the said Company had a Patent for the sole making of Alamodes and Lustrings in England, none could pretend to have a right to make them during the time of their Patent.

Obj. *They say by Vertue of this Clause the Company has Established a Monopoly in favour of themselves, and that they are prosecuting in the Exchequer a great number of Weavers who have all along made these Goods.*

Answer, The contrary appears by their Letter sent to the Weavers Company, wherein they offer them, or any of their Members, to receive them in their Company, according to the true Value of their Stock; reckoning nothing for all their Trouble and great Charges some of them had been at: Besides many of the Company did put in their Money meerly to imploy the Poor. The Lustring-Company doth not Prosecute any Body in the Exchequer, but likely the Custom-House Officers finding some Offenders are putting the Law in execution against them; of which most, or all, are French-men; and none of them made any Alamodes but since the Patent, and several of them did work for the Company, and learned at the Companies cost, in making bad Goods, and after were inticed away by the Companies Enemies to work for themselves.

Obj. *They say this abuse is intolerable, and more mischievous than can be easily either expressed or conceived.*

Answer, This Expression seems to proceed from Envy and Passion; and being a Slander needs no further Answer.

Obj. *They say it hinders multitudes of Men from getting their Livelihoods by their Lawful Trades, &c.*

Answer, It is the only means to set more People at work, and to settle that Manufacture in England; because those of Lions use all endeavours to hinder this Manufacture to be set up in any place, even in their own Country, so jealous are they of letting it go from them. They have Ruined that Manufacture in Holland, Switzerland, Florence, and other Places; and they have sworn to Ruine it in England, as can be proved by several Letters from Holland; so that those that act against the Lustring-Company, do help the French to accomplish their designs.

Obj. *They say it puts the Subjects of England into a worse condition than Strangers, since they may bring those sorts of Silks from beyond Seas, &c.*

Answer, This Assertion is frivolous, because all Patents have no farther regard than to the making in England, and not to Importation; those Foreign Goods paying 32 per Cent. Custom.

Obj. *They say that the Manufacture of Alamodes and Lustrings will by this means never be brought to perfection; because the Company having the sole use of it, will not only sell their Goods at what rate they please, whether good or bad; and even the few Workmen that the Company employs will be brought to work at what rate the Company pleaseth.*

Answer, The quite contrary is plain (to any that understand Trade) that a Company has more Opportunity to improve a Manufacture, than many private Persons can have; and the want of Companies with Joint-Stocks, is evidently the occasion that the French have ruined this Manufacture in the Places before-mentioned: So of consequence the Lustring-Company is the likeliest to Settle it in England, they having brought it to Perfection, and do already Maintain above Four Thousand People. As for Selling at what Rate they please; they have alwayes sold at moderate Rates, and will alwayes do so. The Lustring-Company is so reasonable to their Workmen, that they have no cause to Complain, but blest God for the good they daily receive from the said Company.

Obj. *They say the Lustring-Company can have no just Pretence to hinder others from making those Silks, because the Patent was Granted as being a New Invention; and that there is Oath made by Weavers that have practiced it many Years before.*

Answer, The Patent was as fairly obtained as ever Patent was. The Weavers-Company appeared before King and Council, and gave their Consent, and wish'd the Patentees good Success; at which time there was but one Loom or two in England, and they were set up by the Patentees; and the Weavers-Company did then declare, That none were ever made before, but only tryals; and those that made the tryals could not go on with that Manufacture, to bring it to Perfection.

Obj. *Therefore they pray that the Parliament would appoint a place to Seal all those that are made by those independent of the Company, and to have them Mark'd in the Loom.*

Answer, There is about One Hundred Corporations of Weavers in England; if most of these would make these Goods, they must have at least One Officer to every Corporation to Mark them. The Lustring-Company have about Six Hundred Looms in and about London (besides what they have at Ipswich) some living at Stepney, some at Lambeth, at great distances, which would require a great many Officers to Mark them, which will render it so troublesome and Chargeable, as will prove the Ruine of that Manufacture here; besides the Lustring-Company are Authorized by Law to seal their own Goods, which they carefully do, and do Number, and Mark, and Register them to prevent Counterfeiting; but to have multiplicity of Seals is to give way to Counterfeits, and so the Goods that come from France will be protected, no Officer will dare to seize for fear of Mistakes: So that it is plain, the French have blown up the Coals; as it appears by some French Merchants going amongst the Weavers, to stir them up against the Lustring-Company; telling them, It was their Birth-right, and several other Insinuations; and great Sums of Money has been spent in Treats at Taverns and Ale-Houses; they have at length prevailed with some to appear against the Company, the Frenchmen declaring the English should spend nothing.